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AUTHOR Godbold, Donald H.
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ABSTRACT

A Community Careers Council (CCC) was established in the Oakland, California, area through the cooperative efforts of the Peralta Community College District (PCCD) and the New Oakland Committee, an organization formed in the 1960's to promote discussion among the community's minority, labor, and business sections. Initial funding for the CCC came in the form of a $50,000 grant from the National Manpower Institute (NMI), which promoted the formation of local agencies to pool community resources for career counseling and information. The grant proposal was submitted by the New Oakland Committee, and the NMI funds were matched by the PCCD. In its five years of operation, the CCC has conducted several successful programs: (1) the publication of guides to area career development services: (2) the creation of a clearinghouse designed to introduce students to persons working in various occupations to help them explore career opportunities: (3) a pre-employment training program which provides high school students with job-seeking skills: (4) an Alternative Volunteer Program designed to provide students with five hours of weekly contact with individuals in careers of interest: (5) an Educational Employment Project which provides work-study opportunities: and (6) investigations into the ways that these projects benefit adult students. The report describes PCCD's service district and notes the sponsorship funding of each of the CCC programs. (JP)

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COLLABORATION COUNCILS: VEHICLES FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

Donald H. Godbold
Peralta Community College District
Oakland, California

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PERALTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
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April 21, 1981

COLLABORATION COUNCILS: VEHICLES FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

The questions being responded to by this forum relate to the ability of community colleges to assume a role of leadership in assisting youth with the transition from school to work; and how a meaningful collaboration among industry, business, labor, education, community service organizations, and government agencies can take place.

The Peralta Community College District comprises six cities in the East San Francisco Bay Area and Plumas County, 250 miles northeast of Oakland, California. The District has five colleges -- College of Alameda, Laney, Merritt, and Vista -- located in the East Bay. Feather River College is located in the city of Quincy which is in Plumas County. Vista College is a college without walls. Additionally, the District operates the East Bay Skills Center which is CETA funded, three outreach centers, and the Community Careers Council. The central office for the District is located in the city of Oakland, as are two of our colleges and the Skills Center.

The population of Oakland is approximately 52 to 55 percent minority. The entire District is from 38 to 40 percent minority. As many cities did in the late 60's and early 70's, Oakland established the New Oakland Committee (NOC). This Committee consisting of approximately 40 memebers representative of the Oakland community, on which there are District representatives, is composed of three caucuses: the minority caucus, the business caucus, and the labor caucus. Initially, the intent of the Committee was to bring together the three caucuses and divergent community groups indigenous to each caucus in a forum for

discussion, cooperation, and collaboration to defuse the impending volatile situations that could have erupted into some destruction of the city as was evident around the country at that time. The Committee was successful in achieving its goal.

Although the initial need for the Committee appeared to have subsided, the Committee decided to continue its efforts to promote the economic welfare of Oakland towards community harmony. The Committee has a hired executive director but rotates the officers of the board of directors among the caucuses and meets as a whole once a month. The executive committee and the caucuses also schedule and conduct their own meetings. The Committee itself does not implement or manage projects.

This background has been given to provide a basis for understanding how the Community Careers Council, our collaborative council, was established. Peralta responded to the request for proposals from the National Manpower Institute (NMI), now the National Institute for Work and Learning, which was then headed by former Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz. Mr. Wirtz had just published a book called "The Boundless Resource" the general theme of which was that each community has many resources for counseling, career information, and exploration that can help youth in their transition from school to work that are generally unknown. These resources, if identified, could be made known to the public if a community agency could be established as a clearinghouse at least for information. Such an agency or council could also serve to provide a vehicle whereby the gap between education and employment could be spanned by people and ideas that would facilitate the transition of younger members of the community between institutionalized education and whatever is to follow. This function could include both the rendering of services directly to youth or providing brokering services for established institutions, particularly schools.

As a pilot effort, ten such centers were to be established around the country with a $50,000 matching grant from the Department of Labor through the National Manpower Institute. This money would be available under the stipulation that it had to go to a community organization.

Peralta's proposal was submitted to the National Manpower Institute through the New Oakland Committee and was favorably received with the grant going to the New Oakland Committee. Peralta agreed to provide the $50,000 to match the NMI grant and assume operational responsibility. The Community Careers Council became a reality. We were to pay all the bills and at the end of the year requisition the $50,000 from the NOC. An advisory council was established of NOC members representative of the caucuses, Peralta and Oakland Public Schools administrators, trustees, and even the Mayor of Oakland.

An executive was hired, who with the members of the advisory council, developed the objectives of the Careers Council. Office facilities were located in downtown Oakland and the center became established in 1976. The National Manpower Institute funding was renewable over a three-year period. However, the intent of NMI was to withdraw funding as the value of these councils or centers to the community became recognized and community support was received for their continuance.

The Council has been in operation for approximately five years. It is still regarded as a program of the New Oakland Committee. However, it is primarily funded by the Peralta Community College District ($50,000) and CETA through the Oakland Public Schools and other grant funds which I will elaborate on momentarily.

The Careers Council, particularly under the very capable direction of its second executive director, Mrs. Frankie Arrington, has been overwhelmingly successful and is highly regarded by those involved in its activities. The

programs of the Careers Council have consisted of:

(1) An assessment of existing career development services available to the citizens of Oakland and surrounding areas; and the publication of a Career Development Guide, Directory of Services listing these resources. This guide, which is updated annually, is disseminated widely and requested by many business agencies and individuals. The guide also serves as a source of reference for Council staff when responding to individual requests for information.

The assessment of services also identified the lack of career exploration activities even among those agencies involved in career development.

(2) The establishment of the Community Careers Council Clearinghouse - The primary ongoing program. The Clearinghouse is a collaborative effort with the private and public sector employers and the Council. The Council serves as a brokering agency in providing career exploration opportunities for student referrals. This is done through linking students referred directly with persons working in the career field of interest or concern. Contacts have been made with over 300 businesses which represents about 700 individual contact persons.

Initially, this service was provided to four high schools, the Peralta Colleges, and three community agencies. Presently, it is being provided to eleven high schools, including parochial schools, Peralta Colleges, and approximately seven community agencies, plus individual self referrals. Linking is done for students interested in engineering, computer sciences, accounting, food service, dry cleaning, cosmetology, and many other job and career fields.

From January of 1978 to July of 1980, approximately 4678 students have utilized this service.

(3) Pre-employment Training Program - $65,000. This is a CETA funded program with Oakland Public Schools. The staff of the Council works directly with 185 students annually at four high schools providing pre-employment training in interview techniques, grooming and personal hygiene, resume writing, application completion, and job survival. Additionally, representatives from businesses in the private and public sector volunteer to meet with the students as guest speakers. Students in this program who are desirous of future career exploration are also linked with employers through the Clearinghouse.

(4) Alternative Volunteer Program - $122,000 - This program was funded by the National Urban Coalition through the New Oakland Committee. The purposes of this program were to provide a one-to-one weekly contact of five hours for a student with a significant adult in a career interest field, and implement a study to compare with a control group of non-program students. This program was implemented over a period of 18 months.

(5) Education Employment Project - The Council receives assistance from this project in the form of rent. Another New Oakland Committee inspired project, it is housed at the office of the Careers Council. The Council provides linking services for the students involved. The project was developed by the business caucus of the NOC, Peralta Colleges, and Oakland Public Schools. Approximately 80 students are involved. Students receive pre-employment training, go to school half-a-day, and work half-a-day. Jobs are provided by the private sector. Successful students are guaranteed full-time employment upon graduation from high school. This project is funded by state CETA funds and Title VII funds through the Oakland Private Sector Corporation (Private Industry Council).

(6) Presently, the Council is working with the Kellogg Foundation which is interested in funding a proposal developed three years ago to assess the needs of adult learners for the possible development of some of the above programs, particularly the clearinghouse for adults.

Other ideas are also being considered for possible funding such as the establishment of a small academy program on the LaGuardia Community College model where a program of academic courses are developed for credit, all of which are related to work - be they psychology, sociology, or others utilizing a cooperative education approach.

Finally, we are presently attempting to find a way to computerize the Clearinghouse activity which is now done manually.

All of this is accomplished with a basic staff of six persons, under Mrs. Arrington's directorship. Dependent upon funding and program, the staff has reached a maximum of ten.

Our Community Careers Council is providng the services originally intended by Willard Wirtz. It has identified many of the boundless resources in the community and is providing transitional resources to many of Oakland's youth. As you can see, we are very pround of our Careers Council, the role it is playing in the Oakland community and the support given it by the New Oakland Committee and the business sector. We hope it will continue to expand and be with us for a long time to come.

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